# TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE TODAY

EXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

### A Message From the Director



Greetings;

I am very pleased and proud to introduce our "new and improved" *Texas Juvenile Justice Today* newsletter through this column. The former "Executive Director's Report" focused exclusively on TJJD state operations. A number of people asked over the past few months whether the agency's newsletter could become more reflective and more representative of

who we are today – one agency administering one system. So, we have done away with the Executive Director's Report format in favor of this *Texas Juvenile Justice Today*. This is our first edition.

Through this newsletter, we hope to include stories, articles and features that will reflect a wide array of different programs, special events, staff profiles both from state operations and probation departments, community participation in programs, and operations both at the state and local levels. Stories and profiles of the wonderful people who do this work that you may not hear about otherwise. It's an unfortunate fact of life that most of what we may hear about going on "somewhere else" in our state is of a negative nature. And sometimes it is. But the fact is that the achievements, the creativity, the dedication and commitment reflected through the work of our collective employees doesn't typically get the same level of attention. So this is an effort, one effort, to communicate among ourselves about some of the interesting and noteworthy activities going on in state programs and in local probation departments around the state.

I hope you will find articles of interest in these pages. There are hundreds if not thousands of great stories out there. Please keep sending them in.

And please let us know how we can continue to improve on *Texas Juvenile Justice Today*.

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## TJJD Hosts Post-Legislative Conference and Budget Workshop in San Antonio

TJJD welcomed juvenile justice professionals from across the state to San Antonio for the 10th biannual Post-Legislative Conference and Budget Workshop, held July 27-29, 2015 at the Wyndham Hotel Riverwalk. The TIID Post-Conference Legislative had approximately 400 participants attendance and provided individuals with an overview of changes made during the 84th Texas Legislative session, specifically bills impacting juvenile justice, TFPS, truancy reform, justice and municipal courts, victims of crime, human trafficking, sex offenders, code of criminal procedure and penal code. In addition, audience members heard about legislative appropriations to TJJD and the overall impact of funding changes to the juvenile justice system.

Representative Harold Dutton, Chairman of the House Juvenile Justice and Family Issues Committee, provided the keynote presentation to participants as a supporter of TJJD's mission and to the Texas juvenile justice system. He spoke highly of the work the field did as a

whole this legislative session and the work the system collectively have to do. Specifically, he discussed regionalization and the many opportunities that can be created looking forward. Representative Dutton was very passionate and has remained a strong, effective advocate for the fundamental values of strong families.

This year proved to be the largest TJJD Budget Workshop since its inception with over 340 participants



More than 400 state, county and local juvenile justice participants attended the TJJD Post-Legislative Conference in San Antonio.

in attendance. The 84th Texas Legislature made some significant changes to how funding was allocated to departments and this Workshop provided TJJD and juvenile probation departments with an opportunity to discuss topics related to funding strategies and have question and answer sessions for participants to better understand how juvenile probation departments or local services will be directly impacted and ensuring youth receive adequate services throughout the state.

For the first time, TJJD recorded both events and will post the videos on TJJD's website by late August. Additional information will be forwarded out to all juvenile probation departments when the link is available. TJJD would like to thank everyone who attended, and is looking forward to hosting these events again in 2017. For questions or more information, please contact the Juvenile Justice Training Academy at (512) 490-7913.

#### **Evins Epiphany**

The Evins Regional Juvenile Center conducted a four-day Epiphany Retreat for 25 youth at the facility in July. More than 30 volunteers with Epiphany Ministries of the Rio Grande Valley participated in the event. Chaplain Luis Alvarado reported that community support was strong, staff was great and that youth and volunteers were enthusiastic about the whole retreat. The Retreat is a faith-based weekend event for youth of any faith.



Volunteer Patrick Holden addresses a youth as part of a skit during the Epiphany weekend.

#### **Bell County Juvenile Services Boy Scout Troop 112: the Wolverines**

A grassroots effort by Bell County Juvenile Probation to sponsor a Boy Scout program resulted in the formation of Troop 112 in October 2009. The Troop was originated by Prevention Technician Ronald Holston, who has since retired, and IPO Joev Cummings. Mr. Cummings is the Assistant Scout Master and works alongside Scout Master Monico Monroe. These two gentlemen have a combined 49 years of experience in the Bell County department and are dedicated to improving the lives of young people.

At its onset six years ago, the troop's activities included regular meetings and nearby day trips. Over the years, activities have expanded to include weekend campouts, fishing excursions, merit badge

training, "leave no trace" hikes, voluntary community service, raising money for local charities, and a variety of other Boy Scoutsponsored activities.

In June 2014, Troop 112 began the tradition of a week-long campout where they traveled to 'Bend of the River' State Park, camped for two nights and completed a six-mile hike for scout advancement. They then continued on to Enchanted Rock State Park where they camped for the remainder of the week, participating in various activities to provide the scouts with merit badge and advancement in rank opportunities. In June 2015, the troop traveled to Palo Duro Canyon State Park for the weeklong adventure. The highlight of this trip was a 10-mile hike to a remote campsite where the

scouts spent the night with only the provisions they carried on their backs.

To date, the troop has seen 48 scouts come through the program, usually with 10 scouts at any given time. To join the troop, a prospective scout is typically referred by their supervising probation officer and must show interest in the program. Prior to becoming an active member, they must attend at least two regular meetings and an outing. After demonstrating a willingness to adhere to the standards expected of a scout and a spirit of cooperation, they become an official member. Should they desire, scouts have the option to continue in the troop upon completion of supervision. Many scouts have chosen to remain. Continued on page 4



(Left to right) TJJD Board Chair Scott Fisher, TJJD Executive Director David Reilly, Scout Matthew, Scout Jerry, Scout Master Monico Monroe, Assistant Scout Master Joey Cummings, Bell County Chief Probation Officer Susan Humphrey, TJJD Senior Director James Williams.

#### **Bell County Juvenile Services Boy Scout Troop 112: the Wolverines**

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TJJD Board member Calvin Johnson (left) speaks with Boy Scout Matthew (middle) and Assistant Scout Master Joey Cummings.



Scout Master Monico Monroe, Scout Matthew, Scout Jerry, Assistant Scout Master Joey Cummings.

Fundraisers to "Back the Pack" are common place in the Bell County department to raise money and support to offset the cost of operations. In these fundraisers, the Scouts plan, prepare and deliver "concession stand-type" food items for sale. These fundraisers have proven to be very successful. To continue the spirit of giving, the troop sponsors "The Pack Gives Back" activities. From the funds they have raised, the troop makes monetary donations to worthy causes such as the Awareness and Prevention of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking. Last October, the Wolverines held a fundraiser in conjunction with a local business (Spirit Halloween), and donated all of the proceeds to McLane Children's Hospital to help make hospitals a little less scary for kids and their families.

Back in 2009, other Boy Scout troops and council members were a bit weary when they would see Troop 112 arrive at events, not certain what to expect. Today, it is not uncommon for the Troop to receive high praise and recognition, such as "Best Camp Site" and other accolades, from the Boy Scout organization and other troops when they attend events. The troop attended the Spring 2014 Boy Scout Longhorn Council "Camp-O-Ree" won the Silver Shovel Award by finishing First Place in a weekend competition of scouting-based skills against 10 other troops in the council. A responsibility of the Silver Shovel winner is to host the event the following year. In March 2015, Troop 112 did just that, receiving rave reviews from the Longhorn Council and

other troops who participated and finishing in second place. Also in 2014, the Troop was the recipient of the "Gold Journey to Excellence" award after having met the required criteria. The goal established by the Troop at the beginning of the year was to achieve the bronze award, which they overwhelmingly surpassed.

Two very special scouts are Matthew and Jerry, who are two original members who joined in 2009. Both have made incredible advancement throughout their scouting career. Each is currently classified as Scout: First Class. In April 2015, both successfully completed the "Order of the Arrow Ordeal," which is a major milestone towards achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

### **President's Volunteer Service Awards**

The Texas Juvenile Justice presented Department the President's Volunteer Service Awards to 184 of the agency's most active volunteers. The awards are given in recognition of 100 or more service hours during a twelve month time period. This year's award recipients collectively contributed a total of 33,894 hours of service to our youth. Six volunteers earned the Gold Medal award by each contributing more than 500 hours. Twenty-six volunteers earned the Silver Medal award by each contributing between 250 and 500 hours of service. The remaining award recipients earned the Bronze Level award for contributing between 100

and 249 hours of service. Each volunteer will receive a letter and a personalized certificate from President Barack Obama recognizing their distinguished service.



The President's Volunteer Service Award is the premier volunteer

awards program, encouraging United States citizens through presidential recognition to live a life of service. The President's Council on Service and Civic Participation established the President's Volunteer Service Award program as a way to recognize and honor Americans who inspire others to engage in selfless service. The program continues as an initiative of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

TJJD has participated in the President's Volunteer Service Awards for eight consecutive years. The following volunteers earned the Silver and Gold Medal awards this year:

#### GOLD MEDALS (More than 500 hours of volunteer service to TJJD)

Diana Leggett, *Gainesville State School*Judy Davis, *Gainesville State School*Loretta Felderhoff, *Gainesville State School* 

Nancy Voss, *Gainesville State School* Brian McCann, *McLennan County SJCF* Ernie Black, *McFadden Ranch* 

#### SILVER MEDALS (Between 250-499 hours of volunteer service to TJJD)

Anna Jackson, Ron Jackson SJCF
Claude Jackson, Ron Jackson SJCF
Donald Newsom, Ron Jackson SJCF
James Kit Dean, Ron Jackson SJCF
MaryAnn Rowan, Ron Jackson SJCF
Nimitr Weropas, Ron Jackson SJCF
Paola Guzman, Ron Jackson SJCF
Bettie Washington, Gainesville State School
Bob Voss, Gainesville State School
Gary Carlson, Gainesville State School
Jane Talcott, Gainesville State School
William West, Gainesville State School

Jalyn Demerson, Houston Parole
Jerome Johnson, Houston Parole
Barry Hanson, McLennan County SJCF
Dennis Rejcek, McLennan County SJCF
Doris Herbert, McLennan County SJCF
Paul Henry, McLennan County SJCF
Kelsey O'Toole, McFadden Ranch
Maria Barron, McFadden Ranch
Matthew Williams, McFadden Ranch
Shirley Stephens, McFadden Ranch
Sylvia Rodriguez, McFadden Ranch
Ernesto Hall, Schaeffer HWH
Valarie Thomas, Schaeffer HWH

## Regional Training Officers Meet to Discuss Basic Training Curricula Changes

TJJD hosted its annual Regional Training Officer (RTO) meeting in partnership with the Correctional Management Institute of Texas August 3-6, 2015 at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville. This year, approximately 16 RTOs from around the state came together for this collaborative opportunity. The primary goal of this workgroup meeting is to ensure the content contained the current Juvenile Probation Officer Basic and Juvenile Supervision Officer Basic curricula is updated, relevant, applicable and written in a way so it can be consistently delivered statewide to officers. With the end of the 84th Texas Legislative session, it was also necessary to determine whether or not any legislative changes needed to be made to the Basic curricula.

In preparation for this workgroup meeting, TJJD solicited input via a

survey for suggested changes to the curricula from participants attending TIID's **Training** Coordinators' Conference that was held in June as well as sending the survey to all departments in July. In addition to the survey results. other topical areas of discussion included: feedback from previous Basic training evaluations; how Basic training is being provided locally; courses we may/can shift to e-learning modules; and defining ways to enhance existing Basic curricula. Each year, a significant amount of work goes into updating the Basic curricula. It is unequivocally the individual efforts of those attending that collectively make a difference in how incoming officers are trained statewide. The changes that are proposed during the workgroup meeting will be implemented November 1, 2015. An email will be sent to all departments when the curricula is available to be

downloaded, however, all revised Basic curricula will be on the TJJD training portal website on or before this date.

We want to thank all of the RTOs that participated in this workgroup meeting. Their generous input and commitment made this a valuable experience for everyone that attended. In addition, we would also like to acknowledge Monique Holman with Correctional Management Institute of Texas. Monique continues to do a phenomenal job coordinating the RTO meetings and systematically helps prepare all materials for the RTOs. She remains our primary point of contact at CMIT with this group and is highly efficient, dedicated to her job and always goes the extra mile to provide the best level of customer service possible. Thank you, Monique!



If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the RTO meeting, the RTO process or if you would like to become a Regional Training Officer and potentially serve on this workgroup, please contact Chris Ellison at 512.490.7245 or Kristy Almager at 512.490.7125.

## INTRODUCING...

### Jessica Cabrera named Evins superintendent



The Texas Juvenile Justice Department is pleased to announce that Jessica Cabrera was selected as the new Superintendent of the Evins Regional Juvenile Center, located in the lower Rio Grande Valley. Born and raised in the Valley, Ms. Cabrera is no stranger to the area or the Evins facility as she has worked in the juvenile justice system for over 15 years. A native of Weslaco, Texas, Ms. Cabrera earned a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Corrections and Executive Leadership and Management respectively.

Working as a probation officer for Hidalgo County's Mario Ramirez Juvenile Justice Center, she recalls telling the youth at the detention center to straighten up or they could end up at the Evins facility. "Even though I never toured Evins back then, we were just a few miles down the road," she said, referring to the last stop for juvenile offenders.

Her first impression of the Evins facility was totally different then the negative

stories that she had heard out in the field. "Evins has great trained tenured staff, strong family programs and great community support," she said. She also noted that it takes a special kind of employee to work with the TJJD population.

"This work is not for everyone but it is for many and we have good, dedicated staff on campus. The kids need to know that they can trust the staff and that they matter to them," she said. "I want to build up the morale of the staff. We need to increase our family involvement and get more mentors involved."

Using the old African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child," she recounted that as a single parent, how important family, friends and neighbors were in helping raise her daughter. "These youth here need to see more family involvement and opportunities and I plan to see that we provide as much as we can."

As for community support she believes that every youth at Evins can benefit from a volunteer. "It is the added component that the youth needs to supplement our treatment program. We know that mentoring works; so, the more mentors we have, the better the youth will be," she said.

When asked what if anything she wanted the youth to take with them when they leave the agency, her answer was quick and straightforward. "I want the youth to know that the past does not dictate nor define what their future will be. Only they can choose and be whatever they want in life."

"We know that mentoring works; so, the more mentors we have, the better the youth will be,"

Before joining the TJJD family, Ms. Cabrera was employed as Assistant Director of Education and was Program Chair for the Associate Degree Program in Criminal Justice at Kaplan University. Her stint in the Juvenile Criminal Justice field includes 12-and-a-halfyears as a Juvenile Probation Officer at the Mario Ramirez Juvenile Justice Center in Edinburg. She also worked in the Gray County Juvenile Probation Department in Pampa, Texas where she supervised juvenile sex offenders and in the Hemphill Juvenile Boot Camp in Canadian, Texas as a drill instructor. Ms. Cabrera fills in the vacant position left open when superintendent Donald Brooks passed away last February.

### **Canyon Lake Evening Reporting Center**

When Comal County Juvenile Probation Chief Kris Johnson joined the department in March 2011, he brought with him a long-term vision to open an Evening Reporting Center (ERC) in the county. ERCs, which require youth offenders to report to specified

E. Casey Foundation.

Johnson believed implementing an ERC in Comal County would reduce juvenile crime by providing supervision during the hours crime is most likely to occur. Additionally, it could significantly reduce the of Comal County. In October 2013, the Canyon Lake Evening Reporting Center (CLERC) was opened at the Canyon Lake United Methodist Church. The Methodist Church is available every weekday evening with the exception of Tuesday, when services are provided at



Youth begin their evening at the Canyon Lake Evening Reporting Center with group discussions about their days.

locations during evening hours for programming, skills building and community service, were first used in Chicago, where juvenile justice advocates needed after school programs to keep their higher risk kids from getting involved in the gang scene. They also serve as an alternative to detention pending a youth's hearings. ERCs have become common detention alternatives in many communities throughout the United States and are based on research and best practices recognized by the Annie

cost of detention and possibly residential placement. While members of the juvenile board were immediately supportive, locating a place to host the program in New Braunfels proved difficult. Officials were unable to identify a location that was both affordable and conducive to this type of program. Eventually, working with Comal County Commissioner Donna Eccleston, a location in Canyon Lake was identified that would serve youth in the Canyon Lake, Spring Branch and Bulverde areas

the Community Recreation and Resource Center.

Youth referred to the CLERC report to the program at 4:30 p.m. each weekday after school and during the summer and remain until 8 p.m. Each evening's programming includes counseling, cognitive skills development, parenting classes, homework assistance, tutoring and community service opportunities. It is designed to address not only the criminogenic needs of each *Continued on page 9* 

### **Canyon Lake Evening Reporting Center**

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youth but the individual, education and family needs, as well. In addition to paid staff, volunteers play an important role in providing services to the youth. Many of the volunteers are members of the church along with teachers from local high schools.

The CLERC is a 52-day program that stretches out over three-and-a-half months. The first 40 days are devoted to core programming with the final 12 days of aftercare taking place over a six-week period of stepped-down contact. The program's capacity at any one time is 16 youth.

Britni Rodriguez, a juvenile supervision officer who has been with the program since its inception, described the changes she sees in the youth during their time in the program.

"The kids are not excited to be here at first," Rodriguez said. "However, after a week or two, they begin to realize that they are around people who care and truly want them to succeed. We have had kids come back and visit after they complete the program. One of the biggest things we do is focus on communication."

The CLERC utilizes a pre- and postprogram measurement called the Developmental Assets Profile. This instrument measure each youth's external and internal assets in areas such as support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time,



Youth begin their evening at the Canyon Lake Evening Reporting Center with group discussions about their days.

commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identify. A 2014 review of the pre- and post-assessments by the nationally acclaimed Search Institute found dramatic increases in each of these areas. In a letter to the Comal County Juvenile Probation Department, a Search Institute survey specialist noted: "In my experience (with hundreds of organizations), it's rare to see positive increases of that size in that number of asset categories, so congratulations."

Indeed, Comal County's program has shown remarkable success in dealing with offenders at every level. A total of 40 youth entered into the CLERC between October 2013 and October 2014. Two youth reoffended while enrolled in the program and three have reoffended after completion of the CLERC program. Only four youth have committed a new offense.

In addition to a lower recidivism rate, the CLERC has also resulted in considerable savings for the county. The total cost of detention and placement is approximately \$100 to \$140 per youth per day. However, Comal County has estimated that cost of providing CLERC program services in 2014 at just under \$37 per youth per day.

"The kids ... begin to realize that they are around people who care and truly want them to succeed."

Johnson and others involved with the program are seeking to open a second location in the county. The success they are seeing with their youth, in addition to the cost savings to the county, certainly provide momentum for that to happen.

### **Ayres Halfway House Summer Fun**

#### **Basketball League**

New and exciting things were taking place at Ayres Halfway House this summer! One of those opportunities was competing in the Boys & Girls Club summer basketball league during June and July. For many of the guys this was first time playing an organized sport. They played together and never gave up on each other. During the two-month season, the youth improved each game by learning new skills, working together as a team and overcoming obstacles under the direction of volunteer coach Shaylin Davenport.





Members of the Ayres Rockets competing in Boys and Girls Club Summer Basketball League.

#### Walter C. Gaskin "Family Day" Picnic

Another summer activity was the annual family day Walter C. Gaskin Picnic which, for the past couple of decades, has been sponsored by the SA Northwest Civil & Social Club. This year's family day event had a great turnout of families, volunteers, TJJD staff, and special guest County Commissioner, Pct. 4 Tommy Calvert Ir. The youth at Avres house previously had assisted the Commissioner on several neighborhood clean-up projects and he wanted to personally provide words of appreciation, encouragement to the TJJD youth, families and all in attendance.



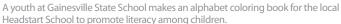
Staff, volunteers and families ensure all participants at the Ayres Walter C. Gaskin Family Day Picnic enjoyed the day's activities.

#### **Ayres Halfway House Graduation**

In June, as they have every year since Ayres Halfway House doors opened, Judson ISD awarded graduation certificates to its hard working and dedicated students. This year Ayres Halfway House youth JC received his GED and HZ received his high school diploma from Judson High School. Both youths' families were in attendance to congratulate their new high school graduates. Great Job!

### **TJJD and Partners Celebrate Global Youth Service Day**







A youth at Gainesville State School makes a "boo-boo bunny" that will hold an ice cube and be applied to minor injuries in children at local hospitals.

This summer, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department was joined by 19 county juvenile probation departments, Hays Consolidated School District, and the City of Kyle in celebrating Global Youth Service Day (GYSD), the signature campaign of Youth Service America. GYSD is the largest service event in the world that activates and celebrates the millions of children and youth who find their voice, take action, and have an impact on vital issues. Youth in the juvenile justice system took this opportunity to showcase their ability to give back and make restitution to their local communities.

A total of 48 facilities and organizations engaged more than 4,400 youth in completing 99 service-learning projects. Youth all across Texas contributed more than 13,000 hours of service during the month of April and impacted the lives of an estimated 20,000 citizens.

The State Volunteer Resource Council for Texas Youth received \$3,000 for planning and supplies from Youth Service America and the Texas Community Service Association, all of which was disbursed to TJID facilities and probation departments through a competitive process. The following grants were disbursed: Gainesville State School, McLennan Co. SJCF, Ron Jackson SJCF and Brownwood HWH, Schaeffer HWH and El Paso Parole, York HWH, Tamayo HWH, Jefferson Co. Juvenile Justice Center, Van Zandt Co. Juvenile Probation Department, Bell Co. Juvenile Services, and Potter Co. Juvenile Probation Department.

The service projects impacted the youth just as much as they did the communities. One youth at Gainesville State School who prepared small baskets of fruit and granola bars for a local food pantry, said, "I care about world hunger because once I went hungry. I want to help people who are going

through it now and reduce the number of people who are going hungry."

Another Gainesville youth helped organize the projects at his facility and said, "Everyone thinks teenagers don't care about the environment or about all the issues we have in today's world.

A total of 48 facilities and organizations engaged more than 4,400 youth in completing 99 service-learning projects.

I was trying to help children by making these 'boo-boo bunnies' and I enjoyed this because I know it was for a good cause." The creative project involved fashioning a washcloth into a small bunny in which an ice cube can be inserted and then applied to minor injuries in children.

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#### **TJJD and Partners Celebrate Global Youth Service Day**

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It would be impossible to summarize all of the service projects, but here's a quick look at some of the results:

- 149,100 tabs collected for Ronald McDonald House
- 5,149 books collected for children, classrooms, libraries, and recreation centers
- 4,500 pounds of recyclables and compost collected
- \$3,002 collected for charity
- 1,483 pounds of food collected for food banks
- 1,203 meals fed to the homeless
- 900 pounds of soil moved
- 607 bookmarkers created for libraries and child abuse awareness
- \$600 in cost savings for local park repairs
- 550 items of clothing given to the needy
- 392 food/gift baskets given to children, shelters, hospitals, and residential care facilities
- 301 boo-boo bunnies made for children's hospitals
- 300 flyers/brochures distributed to raise awareness
- 300 pairs of sock cupcakes for nursing home
- 190 A-Z coloring books made for young students
- 180 feet of irrigation pipe laid for community gardens
- 152 dog blankets/chew toys made for animals
- 139 bags of trash and litter collected from parks and roadways

- 101 plants and flowers laid in gardens and parks
- 100 resource packets were given out
- 72 young students read to by our youth
- 69 education pledges and petitions signed
- 60 bags of food restocked at food bank
- 60 stuffed animals given to senior residents
- 52 posters made to raise awareness of social issues
- 27 surveys taken
- · 21 trees planted
- 20 vehicles washed for fundraising
- 20 vendor and 100 chairs tables set up for a community resource fair
- 16 food collection boxes distributed
- 12 keyhole gardens built
- 10 gallons paint used to make repairs
- 7 fences and 1 gazebo painted and repaired
- 6 park picnic tables refurbished
- 3 culverts repainted to remove graffiti
- 3 cubic yards of mulch spread in a community garden
- 2 homes partially constructed for needy families
- 1 BBQ grill constructed for a nonprofit



A youth at Gainesville State School receives assistance as he makes a small basket of nutritious snacks for a local food pantry.



The youth participating in 2015 Global Youth Service Day were given certificates of participation to recognize their good work.



### What led you to your career in juvenile justice?

I worked as an Adult Probation Officer in Smith County, Texas and found working with Adults was not my thing. I worked in the private sector, made some money, but was not happy. Twenty three years ago I decided to make a career change and applied for a Juvenile Probation Officer position in El Paso County and have been here ever since. The best Professional decision I have made in my career!

### What types of facilities do you operate?

We currently operate a 62 bed Detention Facility and a 40 bed Post Adjudication facility, AKA: Challenge Academy!

### What programs do you feel have proven most successful?

In researching data from the front to the back end of our system, these are our noted successes. Our DP180 diversion supervision program has been able to divert 54% of our departments total referrals, with a 10% recidivism rate. Our Post Adjudication - Challenge Academy had a 68% recidivism rate five years ago. With our Challenge redesign model, the program has vielded great results with a current 13% recidivism rate. We have moved from a Boot Camp model to a Leadership Academy model. We still have a Para-military component, but it is NOT modeled as a" break them down to build them up," we build on

## SPOTLIGHT

## **Roger Martinez**

## El Paso County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

their resiliency and prepare future positive leaders through discipline, structure, education, preparation for adult living, therapy, physical fitness, faith base, gardening, music and the arts.

## What do you see as the biggest challenges for juvenile justice in Texas?

I see one of the biggest challenges for Juvenile Justice in Texas is understanding that what works in El Paso may not work in San Antonio and vice versa. Each community needs to create programs that are tailored to their community needs. There is not a one size fits all. We're just too big of a state and very diverse.

### Are there any changes that you are considering in your county?

At this time, we are in communication with the El Paso Independent School District to partner with them in the establishment of an onsite Vocational Program for our detained youth to attend and receive certifications. Our Department was also selected to work with the Council of State Governments and the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice in exploring our internal Juvenile Justice Reform. We will begin the process in September 2015.

### What do you want others to know about your department?

I need other counties to know that I have the best staff in the State of Texas! They are the ones who make the magic happen. We have been so blessed to

have the support of our District Court Judge, the Honorable Yahara Lisa Gutierrez, the Juvenile Board as well as Commissioners Court. Without their support, we could not do what we do for victims, youth and families.

### When you are not working, how do you spend your time?

When I'm not working, I spend my time "Picking." I enjoy spending Saturday mornings at the local flea market, garage or estate sales. I got to the point of opening a small business where I have to follow my rule of one new item in the house, two items to the shop!

#### What is the best part of your job?

What job? This is a job?....LOL. I was told to find a job you love and you will never work a day in your life. I have arrived, I'm blessed, humbled and grateful to have the opportunity to serve. I am merely passing through and hope to leave a positive legacy for those who follow.

### What advice would you give to a young new juvenile justice professional?

I recently attended the APPA conference and heard Antwone Fisher speak and this was my takeaway, "Before you leave on an airplane, the flight attendant provides safety instructions. They let us know in the event of an emergency, oxygen masks will fall from above, place them as such, secure yourself first then assist those around you." So the take away is "It's very important to take care of yourself first, then help others in need. You can't give what you don't have."

### **Education 2nd Annual Agency-Wide Spelling Bee 2015**

When we are faced with like "Obviate." words "Efficacy," and "Quixotic," we will often rely on the spell-check option ensure we don't make a mistake. But 20 TJJD students didn't have spell-check to depend on. They were part of the 2nd Annual Agency-Wide Spelling Bee sponsored by the TJJD Education Department.

Each campus, including the Phoenix unit, was given a list of more than 1,200 spelling words from the Merriam-Webster's Online

Dictionary that were broken down into four tiers to study for their chance at the finals. Each campus was responsible for holding the preliminary rounds of the Spelling Bee to determine their top three



spellers that would compete in the finals.

Excitement filled the room as all of the facilities faced off for the finals! Each campus was represented by their best and the college classrooms were filled with support from the adults that cheered on the students as they competed round after round.

Our Top 2 "Spellers," IC-S (1st place) and JC (2nd Place), are from the Phoenix Unit housed at the McLennan Residential Treatment Center. EC from the Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex took 3rd place. Each of the contestants will receive a t-shirt with the runner-up Spelling Bee logo, and our first

place winner will receive a t-shirt with the winning Spelling Bee logo.

Congratulations to all of our participants and a tremendous THANK YOU to everyone who helped to make this event such a success.



Staff in the Austin Education Division office served as moderators and judges for youth participating in 2nd Annual Spelling Bee. Youth from all TJJD facilities participated via video conference.

### Willoughby Halfway House Success Story

Often overlooked in the sheer number of youth who move through the juvenile justice system is the effect that TJJD staff and programing can have on the individual life of one youth.

One example of that success is a Willoughby Halfway House youth who has completed the Independent Living program and is a proud apartment renter!

Upon arrival at Willoughby, NR, 18, worked the program, became gainfully employed at Risky's BBQ, saved his money and reached his goal, to be self-sufficient. Prior to his arrival at Willoughby, NR was at the Mart Residential

Treatment Center. He says "I've come a long way since those days because all I wanted to do was fight every day, be aggressive and stubborn all the time."

NR stated that he wanted to thank staff at CRTC/MRTC, Mr. Kelvin Powers, ICO VI, Ms. Demetrius Jackson, JCO V and Ms. Sylvia Waters, Caseworker, for "encouraging me and being there for me when I needed them - they supported me and always let me know when I was doing good - there was also Ms. Felicia Reynolds, Assistant Superintendent, who was hard on me, pushed me to be a better person and always knew when I needed to talk or needed help and that's what I needed."

NR also said, "I hope they all read this because I just want to say thank you for everything you did for me and I appreciate you all." When asked what changes he feels that he made, youth



Youth NR opens the door to his newly leased apartment.

stated that "I had to learn how to control my anger and ignore negative people and not feed in." Rodriguez talked about his experience at Willoughby, saying "I'm proud that I was able to learn how to live on my own, find a job and save money, because I never thought I'd be able to do it." The youth also wanted to also say a big thank you, to Mr. Christopher Golden, ICO V, who he described as "always supportive" and Mr. Charles Mack, ICO-VI, who he said, "helped me a lot, he was hard on me, but I know he just wanted the best for me."

When asked what his future holds, youth stated that he wanted to keep working towards

getting his GED and one day have a career in video gaming.

Willoughby Halfway House Superintendent, Diane Eunice, said, "He was so excited when

> he signed his lease and got his keys, not mention buving himself a bicycle to get to and from work! particularly We're proud of this youth's accomplishment, because this is our first vouth who has moved out on his own, since the facility converted to boys. This young man is a good example of what can happen when you stay focused, determined and surrounded, by a good support system. We

want our youth to know that their lives are not defined by their diagnoses, limitations or barriers and they can thrive like anybody else – but they are going to have

"I hope they all read this because I just want to say thank you for everything you did for me and I appreciate you all."

to put in the work. NR had a lot of cheerleaders here and I want to thank all of the Willoughby staff, for working so hard with this youth and helping him realize his dream, it truly does take a village!"

### **Gainesville Celebrity Waiters Raise Funds**

The Student Support Council for the Gainesville State School held their annual "Celebrity Wait" with a stellar roster of waiters this past June. Celebrity waiters included State Representative Drew Springer, City Manager Barry Sullivan, Sheriff Terry Gilbert, Celebrated Author Fred Funk, and FOX News Announcer John Gibson. Many other popular Cooke county residents such as Dr. Glen Sears, United Way Executive Director

Angie Hare , Abigail's Arms Director of Outreach Kelly Fiore-Watson, Entrepreneur Darrel Rundus, and State School Superintendent Paul Bartush helped raise over \$2,400.00. Sheriff Gilbert won the award for most tips raised with \$500.00 earned. The entertaining evening was held at Sernas in Gainesville.

The money will be used to purchase clothing, toiletries, and bags for youth; bus tickets for family members to visit youth; scholarships for college, graduation supplies, sports banquets, incentives for youth who show progress in the program, meals for youth who leave campus to play sports, and many other needed items.



Cooke County Sheriff Terry Gilbert serves customers Kim Beck, Janice McKee and Challis Castleberry.

### **Schaeffer Halfway House Hosts Family Day**



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On June 27, 2015 Schaeffer Halfway House hosted its Summer Family Day event. This year the youth, staff, and families met at a local park in El Paso. The El Paso Community Resource Council sponsored the event and provided food, activities, and other forms of entertainment. Ultimately, all present had an opportunity to capture the meaning of the event. Each family was able to discuss positive changes in their kids and see that TJJD and each family are on the same page of returning the youth back safely to their communities.

### **TJJD Youth and Staff Participate in National Day of Prayer**

Hundreds of youth at TJJD secure facilities and halfway houses participated in the 64th Annual National Day of Prayer (NDP) on May 7, an event that religious transcends divides and promotes peace, faith, and love. TJJD correctional facility chaplains, who are responsible for facilitating religious services to meet the spiritual needs of our youth, coordinated special activities centered on prayer involving many of the agency's community volunteers.

At Gainesville State School, Chaplain Dennis Banks led an early morning prayer and worship service for staff, many of whom took an active role in the service through music, scripture readings, and testimony. Fifteen of the chaplaincy volunteers then met at the facility's chapel to pray in response to more than 100 prayer requests submitted by youth. The volunteers then visited each dorm to pray with youth individually and in small groups.

Chaplain Luis Alvarado, at the Evins Regional Juvenile Center, arranged for a group of volunteers to visit each dormitory and lead youth in reciting prayers. Chaplaincy volunteers also led a short homily focusing on the meaning and importance of prayer. Youth were also able to request prayer for themselves and family members. In the weeks leading up to NDP, the volunteers focused on the topic of prayer during small group

religious studies.

At the Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Facility, Chaplain Tony Shaw led volunteers and many staff in a campus prayer walk in the early morning hours. During the week prior to NDP, youth were given the opportunity to submit prayer requests. Volunteers led evening devotions, as well.

Chaplain Bob Boggess at the McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility and Mart Residential Treatment Center led the students in a moment of silence at the beginning of their school day in observance of the special event. Volunteers participated in an evening prayer walk around campus and prayed for each youth at the facility by name.

At Schaeffer Halfway House in El Paso, Lorena Dorantes organized a full day of events centered on prayer. The youth enjoyed a concert by Never Too Late, a faith-based youth band, and inspirational speakers that included a retired captain from the local fire department.

Several faith-based mentors McFadden Ranch taught youth how to pray for one another. Volunteer Shirley Stephens helped youth learn The Lord's Prayer during the small group she leads. Due to popular demand, the prayer request box created for NDP will remain available at the halfway house indefinitely. Eight

youth also earned the privilege of attending a community church to participate in its NDP activities.

Rev. Kathy Mack, of Jubilee Temple CME Church of Fort Worth, led a prayer service for youth at Willoughby House. The youth enjoyed a special lunch following the activity. Staff at the Fort Worth Parole Office participated in a brief prayer service led by Parole Officer Dan Fauver.



The National Day of Prayer was designated by the United States Congress in 1952; however, days of prayer have been called for since 1775, when the Continental Congress designated a time for prayer in forming a new nation. This year more than 35,000 prayer gatherings were projected by about 40,000 volunteers across the United States. Several million people were expected to have participated in the call to prayer.

### **Youth Find Community through Service**

Written By: Sylvania E. Omokaro Prairie View A&M University Social Work Program Intern

On May 31, 2015, many from the greater Houston area gathered at Eldridge Park in Sugarland, Texas for the annual Ulinzi Walk. This event was hosted by the Breast Cancer Initiative East Africa Inc. (BCIEA Inc.). Youth from the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJD) Houston District Office performed community service. They moved tables, passed out water, picked up trash, and assisted in any way possible. Before the walk began, event coordinator **Phillipa** Decuir spoke on the importance

of breast cancer awareness and early detection. After, there was a balloon releasing and prayer in honor of those who lost their lives to breast cancer and those who survived the tempestuous battle. This event consisted of games, food, and vendors.

Former NFL player Todd McArthur and wife Sheila were representing Advocare that afternoon. They took the time to educate people on their product and lifestyle changes, but Todd McArthur found himself doing a little more. He bonded with the youth of TJJD. McArthur broke barriers with the young men, shared laughs with them, and

deposited helpful advice about their futures. They eventually did a team building exercise where he and the young men locked arms chanting "Each one. Save one!" as they shifted side to side.

This event proved itself to be noteworthy if for nothing else the unity it fostered. Be it inspiration, support, community, a smile, or a simple lunch, everyone left with something including a greater awareness for something greater than themselves. The walk unquestionably lived up to its Swahili name Ulinzi, which means to protect, guard, watch over, and save.

### **Schaeffer Halfway House Youth Provide Irrigation Services**

Schaeffer Halfway House JCO VI Willie Barraza and a team of youth worked during the month of July on a project to repair broken water lines and the sprinkler system that provides irrigation to the landscape. Overall this project cost about \$400 to complete and saved the State about \$2,000 in labor. In addition to the monetary savings, the project was a learning experience combining technical knowledge, manual labor, and team work to render success.





### Willoughby Halfway House Youth Take Historical Field Trip

With campaigning for the presidency underway and an election in the near future, Willoughby Halfway House youth went on a history field trip to visit The George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. The Museum features an interactive Decision Points Theater where visitors make real-time crisis decisions similar to those made by President Bush. The museum also features important artifacts, such as a piece of the World Trade Center and a full-scale replica of the Oval Office complete with a Resolute Desk, which the youth got to sit behind.

The museum offers a new and revealing look into the decisions and events of the Bush Presidency and houses approximately 43,000 gifts given to the President and First Lady by people from around the world. According to Willoughby Halfway House Assistant Superintendent Felicia Reynolds, "This was a great opportunity for the youth to learn about the role of the president and they expressed that coming to the museum was a moment they would never forget. I think they enjoyed sitting behind the 'Oval Office' desk. It really was a very educational experience."



The George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in Dallas



Willoughby House youth pose for their photo in the replica Oval Office at the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in Dallas.

### York Halfway House Youth Volunteer in Beach Marathon

#### **Beach to Bay Clean-up**

Each year in Corpus Christi in the month of May, the city is about one thing..."Beach to Bay." The Corpus Christi Community Resource Council for Texas Youth and the staff and youth at York Halfway House participated in this exciting event. The annual city wide event Beach to Bay Marathon Rally Race brings over 20,000 runners and onlookers to the Shoreline of Corpus Christi Bay. The York house volunteers. Ministry of the Third Cross, staff, and youth have been assisting the Corpus Christi Road Runners with this annual event for

as long as anyone can remember at the facility. Our assistance this year brought in \$1,800 to the volunteer council for the benefit of the youth at York house. Thanks to all that participated to make this annual fundraiser a great success.

#### **CCCRCTY Raffle**

Maintaining great momentum from their successful participation in the "Beach to Bay Marathon Rally Race" fundraiser, the Corpus Christi Community Resource Council completed their second fundraiser of the year: the CCCRCTY Raffle. The raffle was able to haul in \$1,043.47 producing grateful winners of the following prizes: 1st Place prize, \$200 HEB gift card - Pete Alcosopp; 2nd Place prize, 2 pairs of one-day passes to SeaWorld - Kerrie Gallegos: 3rd Place prize, 4 reserved tickets to Corpus Christi Hooks game - Noah White; 4th Place prize, 2 guest passes to State Aquarium - Harold Smith; 5th Place prize, \$25 gift card Sam's Club - Judy and Jerry. All raffle winner were very gracious and insisted they did it to support the youth at York house.

### **Employees Receiving Tenure Awards**

TIID would like to recognize the following employees who have received a tenure award since June 2015. On behalf of the agency, we extend our sincerest gratitude and appreciation for their dedication and service to the State of Texas.

#### *June 2015*

#### **FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE**

Anabel Quiroz-Elizondo Bradilyn R. Randle Kathi L. Gotcher Lee N. Lewis

Nikki G. Fanning Peggy J. Rohde Rachel E. Carroll Rebecca L. Wade

#### TEN YEARS OF SERVICE

Abel C. Martinez Albert R. Moss Derek J. Rivera Florin Jude Glenn D. Haynes Iacqueline L. Cooper Jaime Ramirez Ieannie L. Moore Larry R. Leatherwood Mary E. Smith Mary E. Williams Milton Reyna Noe A. Flores

Pernilla M. Johansson Rigoberto Quintero

LOCATION/CENTRAL OFFICE DIVISION

**Evins Giddings** 

McLennan CSICF **Giddings** 

McLennan CSICF

**Giddings** Ron Jackson **Giddings** 

Evins

Ron Jackson Tamavo HWH McLennan Phoenix

**Giddings** 

McLennan CSICF Ron Jackson O&A Willoughby HWH

Gainesville McLennan CSICF

Willoughby HWH Evins Evins

Austin (Finance) McLennan RTC

FIFTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE

LOCATION/CENTRAL OFFICE DIVISION Cheryl L. Gray McLennan CSICF

Daryl L. Liedecke Austin (Probation and

*Community Services*) Jerome K. Williams Austin (Training and

Organizational

Development) John A. Gonzales Austin (General

Counsel) Teresa K. Berry Gainesville

Tihara T. McPherson McLennan Phoenix

TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE

Aline Patridg Giddings

Debra D. Pruett Ron Jackson O&A Mark S. Zocher McLennan CSICF

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE

Buddie H. Latham Ron Jackson

FORTY YEARS OF SERVICE

Carolyn A. Jackson Austin (Finance)

#### **July 2015**

#### **FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE**

Amy K. Lopez Byron L. Smith Carolyn J. Sanchez Dora L. Tijerina Eusebia Salas Felipe O. Tremillo Hansel D. Wise Hector Maldonado-Belmontes McLennan CSICF Helen J. Horton **Julie Castillo** Larry G. Blount

Services) McLennan Phoenix McLennan CSICF Evins McLennan CSICF McLennan RTC McLennan CSICF

Austin (Educational

McLennan CSICF Ron Jackson McLennan RTC

Lucinda E. Garcia Maria G. Aguilar Martha N. Lopez-Olguin Paula L. Massey Preston G. Barrett Ramon Beltran Rose M. Barnes

Rosemary C. Welle Sharon R. Hurth Stephanie D. Boettcher

Trov H. Weaver Viola F. Taylor

Ron Jackson

McLennan CSICF McLennan CSJCF McLennan CSICF

McLennan CSJCF **Evins** Gainesville Ron Jackson

McLennan CSICF Giddings

McLennan CSICF McLennan CSICF

Continued on page 21

### **Employees Receiving Tenure Awards**

Continued from page 20

#### July 2015 continued

#### **TEN YEARS OF SERVICE**

Brenda R. Bates
Clinton N. Rhodes
Clinton N. Rhodes
Cleazar Rosas
Cleazar Rosas
McLennan CSJCF
Margaret A. Gunter
Michael W. Ulbrich
Nora K. Conroy
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Roshunda R. White McLennan CSJCF
Sheri A. Coutee Ron Jackson O&A
Therman L. Lowery Gainesville
Weldon G. Chaney Ron Jackson

#### FIFTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE

Angela L. Atkins

Darla D. Hobbs

Evelyn D. Young

Jaime J. Pena

James E. Chambers

Stephanie N. Collins

Gainesville

Evins

Gainesville

Gainesville

Gainesville

Gainesville

#### TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE

Allen P. Houston Willoughby HWH
Arlene I. Johnson McLennan CSJCF

LOCATION/CENTRAL OFFICE DIVISION Aurelia J. Robertson McLennan CSICF Darvis D. Gaines McLennan RTC David B. Johnson McLennan CSICF Kathy L. Clatanoff Austin (Medical) Linda A. Workman Ron Jackson O&A **Marcus Smith** McLennan RTC Rhonda D. Prvor Gainesville Shirley J. Ford McLennan RTC

#### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE

Arlene S. Handrick Giddings
Blanca E. Soto Evins

Carolyn R. Beck Austin (Chief of Staff)
Daniel M. Hamer Austin (Chief of Staff)

David A. Gomez Evins
Katherine Mack Giddings
Margot Chapa Evins
Orlando Zepeda Evins
Santiago Reyes Evins

#### THIRTY YEARS OF SERVICE

Adrian C. Bustinza McLennan CSJCF
Doris F. Rippy Gainesville

#### August 2015

#### **FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE**

Brian T. Dekle McLennan CSICF David E. Thornhill Gainesville Denver C. Foster Gainesville Hassan B. Wolfe **Giddings** Jerry R. Radney Fort Worth Katherine A. Chiarello Ron lackson Lance D. Hicks McLennan Phoenix Maggie M. Leonard Ron Jackson Ricky L. Potter *Giddings* 

#### **TEN YEARS OF SERVICE**

April D. Moore
Janet L. Brown
Kaylee L. Conner
Michael G. Watson
McLennan CSJCF
Michelle Hawkins
Rebecca G. Garza
McFadden Ranch
Austin (State
Programs and
Facilities)

#### FIFTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE

David W. Henderson

Dorothy F. Luera

Stephone M. Coward

Austin (State
Programs and
Facilities)

#### TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE

Amanda G. Meyer

Felipe Adriano

Leon H. Schneider

Suzie G. Blansit

Austin (Finance)

York HWH

Giddings

Giddings

Terri A. Dollar Austin (Chief of Staff)
Treva L. Whitehead Austin (Medical)